



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TIPS LEAD TO SUSPECT IDENTIFIED, ARRESTED IN CHURCH POINT FIRE INVESTIGATION

ACADIA PARISH- The State Fire Marshal's Office (SFM) is applauding the quick response by the public after tips lead to identifying and locating a person of interest deputies were seeking in connection with several intentionally-set fires that occurred within blocks of each other inside the town of Church Point.

Late this afternoon, Charles Richard, 67 of Lafayette, was arrested on one count of Aggravated Arson and three counts of Simple Arson.

Starting around 1:30 a.m. on Friday, March 20, the Church Point Fire Department responded to a call for a house fire in the 200 block of East Canal Street. The home was occupied at the time of the fire, but the female was unharmed and the home suffered the most damage in the carport area. Minutes later, firefighters were called to a mattress on fire in the 500 block of North Main Street. Around 4:45 a.m., Church Point FD responded to a fire at a business in the 300 block of N Main Street. Damage to Spanky's Small Engine and Mower Sales, owned by the town's mayor, was limited to the back exterior of the building. Minutes after that call, firefighters responded to a dumpster fire behind a business also in the 300 block of N Main Street.

The SFM was contacted to investigate the fires due to their suspicious circumstances.

Following an assessment of the scenes, including obtaining video evidence from at least two, deputies determined all of the fires were intentionally set and began looking for a person-of-interest.

Following a request to the public via local media and social media, a tip led deputies to locate Richard at an apartment complex in Lafayette. In an interview with deputies, Richard confessed to setting all four fires in a fit of rage over a recent falling out with an ex-girlfriend, who owned the house he set on fire first.

The SFM would like to thank the public, the media as well as the Church Point Fire and Police Departments for their partnership in solving this case so swiftly.

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